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THE 103. m
CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S

AFFECTIONATE ADVICE

TO

A NEW MARRIED COUPLE.

Rev^d. J. Bean.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall !
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy chrystal cup.
Thou art the nurse of virtue.

COWPER.

L O N D O N :

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CADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Piece, now offered
to the Public, was written at the Re-
quest of a pious Clergyman, a Friend
of the Author, who Desires to
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this Union, by carefully avoiding the Appearance of bearing harder upon one than the other. He has, in short, acted as in the Sight of God, in addressing himself to the Married Pair; and he trusts, that the discerning Reader will acquit him of all Suspicion of intending to come forward as the partial Advocate of either of the Sexes. It is his sincere Prayer, that his Book may be a Means of contributing to that domestic Happiness which it aims to promote and perpetuate.

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THE

AFFECTIONATE ADVICE.

AS the Minister of a benevolent religion, it is not enough for me, to have joined your hands together at the altar. I should be more unworthy than I am of sustaining this sacred character among men, were I not to follow you from thence with my earnest prayers, that you may long enjoy together every comfort implied in the solemn benediction lately pronounced over you. Let me repeat that form of words which so well

11 B expresses

expresses the tender and affectionate concern,
it becomes me to feel for you—" God the
" Father, God the Son, God the Holy
" Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you;
" the Lord mercifully with his favour look
" upon you; and so fill you with all spiri-
" tual benediction and grace, that ye may
" so live together in this life, that in the
" world to come ye may have life ever-
" lasting! Amen!"

Under the influence of that concern for
your happiness, which I felt at your late
nuptials, I am led to offer you some admo-
nitions with respect to the relation into
which you have now entered.

It is an important relation; the most so
of any you are capable of forming in life.

It

It is not your own happiness only, but that of others also, that may be affected by an improper behaviour in this connection. It is an union constituted with a view not merely to the reciprocal benefit of the two persons that agree to form it, but with a view likewise to the manners and the happiness of society at large.

Smaller communities are the nurseries of larger ones. At a certain time of life, a transplantation is made; and the larger field of society takes its character from those qualities that were brought into it from the little enclosures of private families. You, therefore, in entering into this union, are not to consider yourselves merely as two friends that have agreed to share each other's trials or enjoyments, but as the pillars of a new house.

household; as the founders of a little community of rational and immortal creatures; which in process of time may found other small communities, and in their aggregate number form a *multitude*. To this multitude, posted here and there according to the allotments of divine Providence, you may give a cast of character, the influence of which may be matter of pleasure or of pain, both to themselves and those they are connected with, long after you have ceased to act in the present scene. You yourselves may never move far from the spot on which these admonitions address you. Here you were born, and here you may die; and ere long, be forgotten even in this little circle. But the effect of what you are here doing, may outlive you; and the good or evil influence of your conduct on

this circumscribed spot, may take an immense range, and be felt where the name of even your country is scarcely known.

But even this, though it may seem a large view of the possible extent of this influence, is comparatively but a confined one. It may be felt to eternity. The members of your family, and their successors, are immortals. They will not only have a place in society, but they have to do with God. Accountable to him, they must appear before him at the great audit of the world, to receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad; and to you they may be in some measure indebted for the terror or the transport, which they may feel at this solemnity.

AFFECTIONATE ADVICE TO

From these considerations, the importance of your new connection will be evident: and hence, the necessity of attending to that advice, your minister feels it his duty to address to you. He means not to throw a gloom over that joyful scene, that now surrounds you. Long may it continue such! and he will partake of those felicities, of which you are the principal receivers, by the pleasure with which he will contemplate them. It is enough for him to have suggested the preceding considerations, in order to infuse such a salutary seriousness into your minds, as may beget reflection; and dispose you to listen as attentively to those who admonish, as to those who congratulate you, on this occasion.

But

But if you cannot at present conceive of your new situation in this very serious light, the necessity of some good advice may be grounded on a view of it more congenial to the present state of your feelings towards each other.

I will therefore consider you as *fellow travellers* on the road of life; not brought together by accident, or as those who have consented to keep together on the journey merely from a regard to convenience, but from a cordial esteem of each other, heightened by a tender attachment, that has led you to make choice of one another as companions, independent of a view to the conveniencies of travelling in company. You have given yourselves up to each other; and have in the presence of God pledged yourselves, to

bear each other's burdens, to consult each other's peace of mind, and to concur invariably in endeavouring to render the journey as pleasant to each other as possible. Thus conjoined, you have committed a trust to each other. Neither of you have your felicity in your own hands, or have it in your power to be compleatly happy without the other's consent. Never may you repent of this surrender ! But a knowledge of the imperfection of human nature makes me anxious for you ; lest you, who in the first stage of the journey are rendering the way delightful, by the interchange of every endearment that invention can suggest, should sink into the condition of those miserable creatures, to whom the greatest infelicity of the journey is, that they are obliged to travel together. It is not because I perceive

ceive any thing in either of you that seems to preface this melancholy change in your situation, that I now see it necessary to guard you against it, but merely because you are human. You are partakers of a nature confessedly depraved, and in the history of whose disorders there are many sad instances of transition from the height of enjoyment, to the greatest depths of misery.

To avoid the evils into which the imperfections of our nature may plunge us, we should begin *betimes* in the use of preventives.

With this view, the first thing that I exhort you to, is an attention to the preservation of that affection for each other, that first determined you to be partners for life.

life. In the continuance of this alone, you will find the sufferings of the present state considerably reduced. You are not so unacquainted with the general course of human life, as to expect to pass through the world without trials and difficulties. As inhabitants of this world, you must not expect to be exempted from the common lot of humanity; but to feel somewhat of those trials, which naturally arise out of our callings, situations, or connections. Rough roads, dark nights, and stormy days, are to be expected: But while your affections continue undiminished, you will in this circumstance alone, find a considerable alleviation of the difficulties with which you have to contend. The trials which occur by the way will be less felt, when they serve as occasions of proving afresh, the care and tender-

tenderness which the travellers have for each other.

When I exhort you to attend to the preservation of that affection that first determined you to become partners for life, I am not to be understood as if I expected, that the fervour of its commencement was likely to continue. No: I would apprise you, that the first warmth of attachment will fly off: but a more chastized, rational, and steady affection, will succeed to this, if it is cultivated. If it is cultivated, I say; otherwise, the transition will be from idolatry, to disgust.

To cultivate this kind of affection, neither of you should be remiss in those attentions you have been used to pay to each other.

other. Let not the husband grow negligent of any of those attentions, by which a wife feels herself acknowledged a friend, a companion; by which, she perceives herself *still* distinguished from all others, and that all the esteem, compassion, or good manners which he is ready to express to others, is with a sort of unstudied promptitude still more willingly paid to her. This delicate plant cannot thrive under indifference. Sullen taciturnity checks its growth. But it dies; when scarce any time is spent at home, when every body can interest the husband in conversation but the wife, when she is the last person thought of in a recreation, or the least considered in an accommodation. None but an idiot can support that sort of treatment, by which, a wife feels herself

herself considered merely as a sort of domestic animal.

Let not, however, the wife be too ready to consider the behaviour of her husband, as expressive of indifference. Such conclusions often originate in the folly, pride, or petulance, of the observer. To prevent such conclusions where they would be erroneous, let it be considered, that as an object becomes familiar to us, our esteem of it, though not diminished, naturally becomes a more silent sentiment. A woman must guard against the tormenting disappointments, to which childish expectations render her vulnerable. There is a childishness in her expecting always to be fondled; and if she does not become more rational in her expectations, this folly will beget its

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own punishment: She will fancy there is a disgust taken at her, till at length her complaints will produce it.

There should be likewise some allowance made for what is natural to men, and especially Englishmen; namely, a certain bluntness, through which they seem to be indifferent, when they are not really so. What may seem to improper judges, inattention to others; to more penetrating observers, is manifestly nothing but an honest inattention to themselves; a superiority to the mean arts of those interested creatures, whose chief study is the cultivation of an insinuating address.

But should there appear at times something more than a mere complexional inattention

attention to the art of pleasing, something that evidences a disturbance of temper, she is then perhaps called to allow for the agitations of mind that men are liable to be thrown into, from their having much more to do with the world than women have. It is a serene region that a woman moves in, in comparison with that, into which the head of a family is often obliged to launch, in order to support those who depend on him. In the midst of a thousand vexations from the stupidity, negligence, or knavery of those with whom his business lies, has he to earn that bread, which his wife and children may eat in tranquillity. Should he therefore, when he comes home to his meal from this turbulent scene, omit a customary mark of affection, eat his meal in silence, or return a short answer to a civil question,

let not the wife conclude that these things are demonstrations of indifference to her, and listen to that Dæmon of Discord who would prompt her to resent them as such. No: Let her recollect, that now is the time for her to exert all the softness of her sex; and to call forth all the sweetness, humanity, and tenderness, of her nature; to soothe him who has been toiling all the day, principally, perhaps, on her account.

In cautioning a wife not to be too ready to consider herself neglected, I have not imparted the whole of my advice to her. I have admonished the husband not to be negligent of those attentions that are due to his partner; and she is to remember, that the same positive duty is incumbent on her. It will be impossible for affection

to be preserved, if she treads in the steps of those inconsiderate persons, who, as soon as the marriage rites are celebrated, become remiss in certain engaging things, of which they before had been scrupulously observant. Must not she sink in the esteem of any understanding man, who by her conduct seems to say, "I have now obtained my settlement?" And nothing is more calculated to suggest such an idea, than a relaxation in former attentions. When a woman abandons herself to sloth and indulgence, when she degenerates from neatness to a disgusting negligence, from industry to indolence, from obligingness to selfishness, when these omissions are continued in without any necessary cause, after they have been gently remonstrated against, it is natural for a man of reflection to read this

fordid sentiment in his wife's bosom, and for a man of generosity to be shocked at the discovery,

She that dreads the entertainment of such an opinion of her in the mind of her husband, must take care to let it have no support from her own conduct: She knows what is now pleasing to him, by remembering what was formerly so: And he knows, she is capable of pleasing him, by recollecting the methods she once took to give him pleasure. If with the power still in her hands, she is remiss in the act of pleasing, there is but one inference for him to make; namely, that she is now less solicitous to please than she was.

In speaking to women on this article, I
am

am naturally led to notice a monstrous perversion of character that has been observed in some of the sex. Negligent of all the things that are to be expected from them; and yet, tormentingly busy in the husband's immediate province. No sign of order, oeconomy, or diligence, in those departments of the family that are consigned to their management, and yet continually interfering where they ought to be almost invisible. If a woman would preserve the affections of her husband, let her not only be attentive to him in all the engaging actions that her sex, her situation in the family, and her vows, give him a right to expect from her, but let her *confine* herself to these.

The disposal of his time or his property,

perty, his journies, his connections, &c. are things which are regulated by the nature and circumstances of his calling in life, and of which, He alone is qualified to judge. Let her not even *seem* to dictate to him, in these things. There are few things more inimical to the preservation of affection, than a woman's departing from that line of amiable submission which she ought to preserve with respect to the affairs of her husband's province. Every interference of this sort, is a violation of the feminine character; a man revolts at it, and is grieved to perceive, that his wife has forgotten that it was her province to soften, to cheer, and to refresh, that mind, on which the weightiest cares of a family press.

The unfriendly tendency of such interference

ference in women, to the maintenance of mutual affection, is not more manifest, than that supercilious treatment of a woman which we discover in those men, who never condescend to honour the understanding, or to contribute to the satisfaction of a wife. Though nature, good sense, decorum, and propriety, all rise up against that woman, who presumes to dictate in a husband's province, yet may not she be capable of advising? Many a man, wise in his own account, might have been saved from ruin, had he only deliberated with that prudent, thoughtful, and affectionate wife, to whose enquiries he would hardly vouchsafe an answer, though introduced with all the graces by which a gentle and submissive spirit solicits attention.

Far be this supercilious behaviour from him to whom I address these precautions, and who has so lately solemnly pledged himself, not only to maintain, but honour his wife. Rather let him deliberate with her, who ought to be his dearest, and who is his most disinterested friend, in affairs that are allowed to be his immediate province to superintend. He may derive some useful hints from a female mind in some particulars, though it may not (from want of practice) be comprehensive enough to grasp the whole of his system. And if not, yet he gratifies an innocent solicitude to know something of affairs, in which she is deeply interested. At least, he prevents the mortification of a sullen or contemptuous concealment.

Con-

Condescensions of this kind contribute very much to keep up the warmth of a rational affection, as they honour the understanding of a woman; as they imply a confidence in the interest she takes in his cares, anxieties and labours; and above all, as in such deliberations, she feels herself treated as a friend. There is a way of doing this, that shall not foster a disposition, to be unbecomingly interfering. It may be for the happiness of both parties, that the husband conducts these condescensions in such a manner, as that they shall always appear to be acts of affection, rather than matters of right.

There is a circumstance in almost every matrimonial connection, that is often found to have a considerable influence on the hap-

piness of the married pair. There are *relations* on both sides. In properly managing the regard paid to these persons, the preservation of mutual affection is found in many cases very much to depend.

Here, some of the most humiliating instances have been exhibited of that sort of selfishness, that cannot be satisfied with any thing short of the monopoly of affection. How unreasonable is it to expect, that love to me should extinguish affections that are due to those, whom duty, nature, and habit, require me *yet* to love? The mind must be perverted, where we do not perceive something additionally amiable in that married person, who, in the midst of new connections, cares, and occupations, still manifests to a tender parent, the affectionate
and

and reverential spirit of a dutiful child; or the still-existing union of souls, that interested a fond brother and sister in each other's happiness. A rational affection is heightened by observing, that the object of my peculiar attachment appears an amiable creature, in whatever connection I contemplate this object. On the other hand, I am the subject of a sordid passion, if I can rest satisfied with attentions paid to me, while I observe that the person thus devoted to me, is an unnatural creature to every body else.

Affection to our relations is not inconsistent with the fondest attachment of the heart to a husband or a wife. Do not therefore encourage that littleness and pride, which would lead you to think yourself defrauded

frauded of something that was your own, when you see any attentions paid to them. It is a mean jealousy of temper that makes us *prompt* to consider ourselves rivalled. It is a base pride that leads us to put an invidious construction on those signs of respect and esteem that are shewn to others; and married persons should guard against such a cause of infelicity to themselves; by considering, that the distribution of affection does not necessarily diminish its quantity, but that it is even capable of increasing, as the objects on which it is exercised multiply. Conjugal affection can indeed be shared only by two persons: but this may grow and strengthen, without any loss sustained to it from the cultivation of filial, or fraternal affection.

While

While the bonds of matrimony must not be suffered to dissolve those of filial piety, it may be as well, however, to suggest this hint to married persons: Let them avoid, as far as is consistent with duty to a relation, that kind of manner in attending to them, which is calculated to awaken jealousy in the married partner. Through an indiscrete neglect of this rule of prudence, the visit of a relation has sometimes been the epocha of misery to a couple who have hitherto lived in harmony. Cannot we be glad to see a parent, a sister, or a brother, without reducing a wife or a husband to a cypher in the house, during their stay in it? Is it prudent to be so profuse in our attentions to them, as to lead the partner of our life, to have an interest in their departure?

These

These admonitions on the article of attentions, seemed to me deserving of your regard. I judged them important, by having estimated their influence on domestic peace. Your adviser does not, however, by these counsels, nor by any thing he can say, pretend to furnish you with a compleat remedy for all the disorders of married life. He has not the vanity to suppose, he can impart to you the precious secret by which this state may be purged from every thing objectionable; nay, he does not believe that the human mind will ever have the honour of making such a discovery. Experience and observation may furnish directions for obtaining many enjoyments in this state, and for these you must be willing to compound, by submitting to some inconveniences.

Do not therefore entertain visionary expectations of bliss, which the circumstances of the world, and the imbecility of your nature, will render it impossible to realize. You must lay your account in the expectation, not only of meeting with untoward circumstances in the world, but likewise, in the expectation of discovering faults in each other. Neither the scene, nor the actors, will in the sequel be found to answer the ideas you may form of them, from the delusory style of congratulation. The scene you cannot alter; it will be managed by a superior power: but you may accommodate yourselves to it; and this is incumbent on you, not only in the relation you both sustain to the great Disposer, but with respect to the obligations you are under to support one another comfortably, in the various

various changes of situation into which you may be thrown.

Amongst other things which should be your care in this view, is the cultivation of *good temper*. Without this, you can enjoy no pleasing situation, nor support any inconvenient one.

Without good nature there may be many valuable qualities; but they will be all gladly exchanged (if it is possible to make the transfer) for that sweetness of disposition which atones for a thousand defects. With this engaging quality, the attentions that have been recommended will be so far from being impracticable, that they will be as it were spontaneously practised; or if sometimes there is a failure in them, the
omission

omission will be kindly interpreted. It will be attributed to want of thought, rather than to any thing of a reprehensible nature.

The cultivation of good temper, is a thing not so much out of our power, as is generally supposed. The general idea is, that good temper is a certain gift of nature, like beauty; which a man cannot have, unless he is born with it. It must be confessed, that some seem to be born the delight of human kind in this respect; and that others again, seem to have brought into the world with them that unhappiness of temper, that seems incapable of melioration. Thus, there are some so incurably bad, that no one expects to see an improvement. The case is deserted, as a desperate one. And there are others, so spontaneously

good, that admonition seems superfluous. But the generality of mankind are not found in these extremes. The tempers of most people are made up of a mixture of good and bad; and it is frequently seen, that in many persons in whom these were once in an equal proportion, in a course of time, one of these qualities predominates; and the character of the person in point of temper, is denominated accordingly; namely, from that which has the ascendancy.

The ascendancy of condemnable tempers, is not to be charged wholly to the circumstances that excite them; but in part, to the not imposing on ourselves, that sort of discipline which has a tendency to counteract the influence of those circumstances, in depraving the temper. That the good in our temper
may

may prevail, is unquestionably a most desirable thing; and this desirable thing, is attainable. Now, if Interest may be at all allowed to second the voice of duty, hear what she says to the wedded pair: 'If you wish to render your union delightful in all situations, and to relish it to the very last of its continuance, seek the improvement of your tempers, at any price.'

Give me leave to mention a few things on the cultivation of this necessary ingredient in domestic comfort, good nature.

Endeavour to ascertain what is that particular defect of temper into which you are most liable to fall, and make a point of setting a strong guard over yourself, in that

particular. Let this idea be ever present to your mind: 'At that weak part of my nature, all the miseries of matrimonial life may enter.' This will probably be found an hard service; but the necessity of the case obliges you to it. You have the choice of but two things: You must be incessantly vigilant and self-denying here, or suffer every domestic delight to be torn from you.

But there is another piece of advice I have to give you, that is easier to practise; and by attending to which, you may save yourself some of the severities to which the preceding admonition calls you. Avoid the *occasions* which excite that unruly temper which is most ready to shew itself. This is a piece of advice given to you both, with respect to each other. Having ascertained

each

each other's particular imperfection, you have likewise learnt what things they are, that call it forth: *These* you must shun as far as possible*. This is necessary, not only because it is your duty to give no offence to each other, but in point of interest, you are bound to this, because that which excites a vicious passion, strengthens it.

Here a number of *little things* become the objects of your attention; nor must they be passed over because they are little. Little things are felt to have great power, when they act upon a tender part. An insect could have blinded Sampson, when in his full strength. No small portion of

* The author has expressed himself with this limitation; because it sometimes happens that what is objected to is a duty which God has expressly enjoined.

the uneasinesses that have embittered married life, has arisen out of the insect-occurrences that every day produces; and contemptible as they are in themselves, they must be watched, on account of the mischiefs of which they are capable.

There is no evil that petty occurrences more frequently generate than *frivolous disputes*; nor are there many things, which it is more the interest of the married pair to guard against. Above all things avoid disputes. "The contentions of a wife,"

saith Solomon, "are a continual dropping."

Drop after drop wears a deeper impression than a thousand storms. What therefore is that unthinking woman about, who indulges a litigious spirit on every occasion; who will debate every point; and have the last

word.

word about straws? She is forcing her husband into a society to which he has had, perhaps, many objections, none of which he will feel, at length, in the refuge it affords him from the misery of incessant debate.

These frivolous and vexatious disputes about the trifles of the moment, have produced more alienation in married people by their frequent irritations, than the more alarming crimes; and have been the root of the worst. Whatever you forget beside, let me conjure you both to remember the mischiefs of frivolous litigation.

After all your care, perhaps there will be some little outbreaks of your respective weaknesses. Yet it is not a few eruptions of this sort, that will throw you back in the cultivation of good nature, if you can learn

to make due allowance for *constitutional infirmity* in each other. This I must recommend to both of you. It will have its advantage in suppressing an unhappy temper in many instances, by leading the party offended to place the thing that would otherwise excite ill temper to the account of bodily infirmity; and where the ill temper has been drawn forth on what are supposed insufficient grounds, it will prevent the propagation of unhappiness, by leading us to *pity*, where we should otherwise *censure*. Where there is a readiness to make this wise and humane allowance for constitutional infirmity, the heart will be no more alienated by a little out-breaking of temper, than by a fit of epilepsy. The paroxysm in either case, will engage the compassion of the spectator.

Be

Be it remembered here, however, that we must not be called upon too frequently for this allowance; and that it will hardly ever be granted, unless the *tenor* of life is such, as helps us to make a candid interpretation of particulars. It is indeed the tenor of life that preserves, or destroys affection. It is not a few brilliant expressions of love, in the midst of a vast heap of unkindnesses, that will reconcile us to the marriage union: Nor is it a few deviations from the line of duty, that will render it unpleasant, provided that the general tenor of life is expressive of native goodness, and unquestionable affection. Goodness of temper will ensure this to you. Cultivate that, and the general course of things in the connection you have formed, will be more than tolerable; it will be pleasing. The

recollection of it at some period distant from its commencement, will be grateful; notwithstanding, there may some things occur to you in this retrospect, that you will wish had been otherwise.

Therefore, be persuaded to bestow all the pains on this study it may require. Be assured that no equivalent can be found for good nature. Let the husband be sober and industrious; let the wife be chaste and frugal; by these virtues you may be preserved from some of the miseries that wait on profligacy and extravagance; but while you escape these, what will your house be, without good nature?—Not a home. By a *home*, we understand a place where the mind can settle; where it is too much at ease to wish to rove. It is a sort of refuge,

to which we fly in the expectation of finding those calm pleasures, those soothing kindnesses, that are the emollients and the sweeteners of life.

All the admonitions, therefore, I can suggest on the article of temper, may be comprized in this short precept: *Endeavour to make your house a home to each other.* Absence from it will then be no gratification to either party. By the husband's attending to this precept, his return will be welcomed by those he left at home. It will not be expected with that sort of anxiety, that oppresses the family of an ill tempered man; fearful that some error unobserved by them should meet him at his entrance, and apprehensive that thereby his arrival will be announced to all the family, by an explosion

explosion of passion. By the wife's observance of this maxim, the husband will return with a pleasure equal to that with which he is received. "The heart of her husband will safely trust in her;" as the wise man speaks. Over the door of his house he will see written "SACRED TO PEACE;" and hither, in the assurance of finding that repose and consolation he cannot find in the world, he will hasten from its daily perplexities and labours.

But now, my dear friends, I bring forward some observations, to which I solicit your most earnest attention. Were I to omit them, I should put into your hands a very imperfect directory for your conduct in that station, in which you are now placed. As what I have further to say is of the

greatest

greatest importance, I have reserved it for the conclusion of my address; for I wish above all things to leave the impression of this on your minds at our parting.

Whatever situation we enter into, there is one thing indispensably necessary to our enjoyment of the happiness it is in itself capable of yielding: We must endeavour to acquit ourselves as the servants of God in that situation. Thereby we obtain his blessing in it; without which, no condition can long be either safe or comfortable. Let the situation be social or commercial; let it promise little or much; let the government of an empire, or only the care of a family, be committed to us, the observation holds equally true. If it is a situation in this world, it is in a place

place concerning which God has said to mankind, "Thorns and briars shall it bring forth unto you." Piety, however, has resources in a world that lies under such a sentence. But without this, the fool and the wise will experience one common disappointment of their respective hopes, in the painful execution of this sentence.

If you determine to adopt the rules I have suggested to you, I must apprise you, that though I suspect not your sincerity in resolving to put them in practice, yet I should not expect them to be long adhered to, if I doubted of your possessing the fear of God in your heart. One can have but a poor opinion of the sufficiency of those rules of prudence, that are not supported on the basis of genuine piety.

There

There is little to be expected if this is wanting, even in those marriage connections where the parties have joined their hands from the most sincere affection for each other. Where this is wanting, there is no sufficient steadiness of principle; the resources of patience, resignation, forbearance, compassion, and candid allowance for natural infirmity, virtues for which there may be frequent and large demands, are small, and may be soon exhausted. The resources, likewise, that are necessary to carry us through some of the more arduous parts of that kind of discipline on ourselves that has been mentioned, are insufficient, where reverence for the will of God, dependance on his assistance, and a desire to please him in all things, are wanting. If therefore you have rushed into this connection,

tion, thoughtless and regardless of what is incumbent on you as immortal creatures, you have little to expect in it, while you remain such; and your business is, to correct this error at the beginning. Its influence will otherwise run through the whole web of life, and defraud you of many of those enjoyments marriage was designed to bestow on mankind.

If, however, you are to be considered as persons of genuine religion, this circumstance alone is a favourable omen of your future life. It is the smile of Heaven on the morning of your day. Every serious mind takes an interest in the yet unfolded page of your history, and expects from this circumstance, that it will disclose many grateful instances of the excellency of wedded life.

life. The maintenance of mutual affection has been recommended to you as a great object of the attention of a married couple. And what is so likely to keep up its vigour, as a deeply rooted regard to a religion that cherishes all the tenderneſſes of which our nature is capable? Such is christianity: A religion that exhibits the highest example of benevolence, and ſuggeſts the moſt powerful motives to its imitation. A mind imbued with the views and principles of this heavenly ſystem, is formed to grace any lawful ſituation. But how amiable a figure muſt it make in the marriage connection, where there are ſo many opportunities of gratifying its philanthropic ſpirit.

Chriſtian piety ſupplies a ready ſource of forgiveness towards an offender, by the ſenſe
with

with which it is always accompanied; of *our own faults*, and our consequent need of forgiveness from God. It promises to keep up the spirit of conjugal affection, by that sublime species of benevolence it induces, through which, religious persons are led to desire the spiritual and eternal welfare of all; but especially those, to whom they are more nearly allied.

Christian piety, while it thus calls forth and strengthens the mutual tenderness of the married pair, promises their continued happiness, by its teaching them not to expect *too much* from each other; but to consider that neither of them has married an "angel," but a human being; a creature "encompassed with infirmity." This just view makes them sober in their expectations;

tions; and they are likely to sit longer, and more comfortably at the feast, than those who enter upon it ignorant of human nature, and unprepared to receive the proofs of its imperfection.

Actuated by such a principle, the married pair will likewise avoid the alterations that arise from a conflict between the love of pleasure, and the expence attending its continual and excessive demands. They will be preserved from the embarrassments that in the end embitter this connection, where the parties agree to adopt an expensive style of living. In short, it is by these, and many other concomitants of genuine piety, that old age steals on, leaving at the last nothing but the dregs and feculence of worn out enjoyments. Something

yet remains, to give a relish to the very lees of life.

Mistake me not, as if by piety, I meant merely the making a profession of religion, or the adoption of that system of truths, you hear from me your minister. There are people who go thus far, and give as many affecting instances of the infelicities of married life as any. Christian piety must have, like many other things, its principles; and the more truth there is in the principles, the more purity and energy there is likely to be in the practice. But, merely to adopt the principles, however evangelical, is not christian piety. This is a thing that is manifested by making the word of God the rule of life.

A truly

A truly pious man makes the Holy Scriptures the rule of his expectations, and his conduct; making them the rule of his expectations, he embraces "the faith once delivered to the saints," whatever reception it has in that age in which he happens to live; making them the rule of his conduct, he consults them with respect to the several relations he may sustain in life, that "he may know how he ought to walk and please God." God has given some very particular directions, how to conduct ourselves in relative life; that in situations of such importance, the servant of God may not be at a loss how to act: The married person, for instance, has his behaviour marked out, and these passages the man of piety will study.

The superficial religionist will not, indeed, be thus attentive to the preceptive part of scripture. It is lamentable to observe, how many there are, who take up the volume of Inspiration merely as a book that reveals an expedient for our escape from punishment; without ever regarding it as the directory of conduct. If these are your models of piety, you will neither adorn, nor enjoy, the religion you profess. There is nothing to be expected from your religion, unless it is of that sort, that leads each of you to be attentive to your respective duties, as in the sight of God.

What I have then to recommend to you, is much meditation, accompanied with prayer to God, on those passages of scripture, which teach you how to act in this relation.

lation. They were rehearsed to you when your nuptials were solemnized. And as part of an inspired book, you are to consider the exhortation in the office of matrimony, as God's charge to you from the altar.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as
 "Christ also loved the church, and gave
 "himself for it, that he might sanctify and
 "cleanse it with the washing of water, by
 "the word; that he might present it to
 "himself a glorious church, not having
 "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but
 "that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives
 "as their own bodies—Let every one so
 "love his wife, even as himself*—Huf-

* Ephes. v. 25—33.

A NEW MARRIED COUPLE
AFFECTUOUS ADVICE TO

34

**"bands love your wives, and be not bitter
 against them".—Ye husbands give honour
 unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel
 as self."**

Perhaps, no part of scripture less requires a comment than these passages. If a husband does but understand the meaning of familiar terms, it is sufficient to enable him to comprehend the meaning of this part of sacred writ. Here he sees, that God requires him to love the woman he has chosen, to be kind and tender to her, yea to honour her; and, that therefore, the domestic tyrant, the fierce animadverter on every little miscarriage, and the husband, whose contemptuous treatment of a wife is an habitual degradation of her, are persons con-

* Col. iii. 19.

† 1 Pet. iii. 7.

denied by the Lord of all: who is to be considered as the avenger of the wrongs of every deserving wife thus injured. Here, husbands are to consider, that something more is required of them than merely to afford a maintenance; and that they do not discharge their duties, even when they provide what is called a very comfortable one. Without tenderness, kindness, respectful treatment in words and actions, how can it be enjoyed? For want of these things, many a woman who by her dress seems to tell the world, she has a husband that spares no expence to gratify her, is in all her finery to be considered as a pampered and gaudy victim, ever bleeding under the hands of domestic cruelty. She is as little to be envied, as the devoted animal that stood at

the altar, ornamented with a wreath of flowers.

All that the warmest advocate for women can enforce on husbands, being, as you see from the above quoted passages, expressly required by God himself, you are now to consider what sort of an *example* the inspired writer has selected for the model of an husband's behaviour towards his wedded partner. "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

* Eph. v. 33, &c.

Here

Here is at once, example and motive. What more could even an inspired man say, in order to form the husband to every thing that is affectionate, disinterested, sympathizing, and attentive to his wife, than to say, "*Love her as Christ loved the Church?*" He that understands christianity, finds a volume in such a sentence. His mind instantly recurs to that astonishing instance of benevolence which his Redeemer exhibited, in giving himself up to sufferings and death for the salvation of sinners; to that which he shewed in sending forth ministers to preach the gospel to every creature; to the tender attention he pays now in heaven to all that receive this gospel; taking care that every thing is provided, that is necessary to increase their faith, purify their hearts, administer to their consolation, support them
in

in their conflicts, and cherish the hopes he has formed in them of participating in the fulfilment of those gracious purposes towards his church, that are to be consummated in heaven, and enjoyed to all eternity. This, says he, is my pattern. Such a friend as Christ was to his church, am I called to be to my spouse. Am I a part of that body, of which he is such a saviour? Then he gave himself for me. Let me imitate that affection, of the fruits of which, I humbly hope I am a partaker. I here find myself called to love my wife, though she is not without fault; to interpose between her and danger; to take the inconveniencies of the union with her on myself; to supply, as far as is in my power, every thing that can contribute to her comfort; to seek not only her present, but everlasting happiness.

happiness. For thus did Christ love his church.

To the wife, the word of God speaks thus: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your

own husbands as unto the Lord. For

the husband is the head of the wife, even

as Christ is the head of the church.

Therefore as the church is subject unto

Christ, so let the wives be to their own

husbands, in every thing. "Let the

wife see to it that she reverence her hus-

band †."

Here, you see, that on one virtue, almost

the whole of the admonition turns; namely,

submission. This virtue is therefore of

great account in that part of the system of

to seek not only her present but everlasting

* Eph. v. 22—24.

† Eph. v. 33.

christian morals which is particularly addressed to a married woman; and no doubt (among other reasons) because it is a sort of radical virtue, from which will naturally proceed other feminine excellencies; and without which, the character of a wife will be essentially defective.

It need not, surely, be necessary to observe, that the superiority which the scriptures give to the man over the woman, is not that of a master over a slave: The precepts enforced on the husband are of that sort, that sufficiently prevent our supposing such a mistake, on the authority of scripture. It is a superiority founded in reason, and maintained in love. God has not required the submission of a slave, but a reasonable and advantageous submission: Such as a man of good sense knows it becomes him

to receive, and an affectionate wife will yield with pleasure. It is a mistaken idea of things, that leads some women to consider every thing of this kind as the relinquishing of all self defence; so far from it, it is their best security, as well as one of their loveliest ornaments*: like polished armour, it is both beauty and defence.

How far therefore from that character which the Holy Scriptures inculcate on women, are those who are the bane of all domestic order and comfort, by that spirit of resistance through which a man has no rule in his house, but what he purchases at the expence of peace. How plain is the voice of christianity to christian wives! Indeed, the Scriptures carry this piece of female duty farther than perhaps most christian

* 1 Pet. iii. 4. as to good men

men will claim it: "Let the wives be
 "subject to their own husbands in every
 "thing*."

Now, to prevent the possibility of a mis-
 understanding here, mark the Apostle's illuf-
 tration. "Wives submit yourselves unto
 "your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
 "For the husband is the head of the wife,
 "even as Christ is the head of the church;
 "and he is the Saviour of the body.
 "Therefore as the church is subject unto
 "Christ, so let the wives be to their own hus-
 "bands in every thing †."

The church is to Christ, what the mem-
 bers of a body are to the head: i. e. moved,
 employed, at rest, or in action, as he wills

* Ephes. v. 24.

† Ephes. v. 22—24.

and directs. She is always to be known by these circumstances, that as her legislator, she receives laws from Christ; as her Lord, she receives commands from him; as her guide, she follows him. That religious society, therefore, which renounces the authority of Christ, pursues an interest separate from his, and sets up for its own directors in matters of faith and morals, is not the church. Nor is any individual who may be thus characterized, to be considered as a part of the church of Christ; "which is the blessed company of all faithful people *."

This model of subjection, unreserved subordination, and reverential deference, is a woman in the ties of wedlock, to make

* Sacramental office in the book of common prayer.

her *exemplar*; if she would be found in that relation, such as God would have her to be. Let her be frugal, industrious, cleanly, and chaste; she is to have the praise of all these good qualities; but let her remember, that if withal she is self-willed, and refractory, one thing is wanting; and that, almost the only thing which the Holy Scriptures enjoin her: not because the virtues she exhibits are of no account with God, but because they are of little worth, unaccompanied with a spirit of submission. Much as she may triumph in the contemplation of her superiority over the idle and extravagant, with whom she compares herself, she resists the order of God, and her resemblance is not the church, but the *world*; like whom she presents a shocking contrast to the spouse of Christ;
rebellious

rebellious against his government, to which his spouse submits; despising his authority which she loves, and with equal ingratitude and folly rising up against the power, that both her obligations and her interest require her to obey.

Let the husband and the wife contemplate the two examples an inspired Apostle has chosen for their respective imitation; and they will find, that all that has been said in the former part of this address, and which has been enforced apparently from a regard to prudence only, is bound on them from more authoritative considerations; and that God himself requires it of them.

But the world, like women, the pictures of
the world, the pictures of Christ.

I designedly suppress any further comment on those passages of Holy Scripture which were read to you at your marriage, that I may recommend the text itself to your consideration. Make a point of sitting down to reflect on these, and other passages in the sacred writings, in which the duties of husband and wife are set forth. Perhaps if you made it a rule at the return of any particular day (your wedding day for instance) to peruse these passages, it might prevent your entirely overlooking what so much concerns each other's credit and comfort.

At any rate, however, charge yourselves with this task: Attend to what God says to you on this subject, and reject, with an honest indignation, those opposite sentiments
with

with which the gay and profligate part of mankind daily insult both God and man. To the same fate also let those be consigned, which weakness and inconsideration traditionally adopt, and form into maxims of folly and mischief. I would have you not only read the passages, but examine yourselves by them. 'Am I this sort of person, in this relation? Did I act in such a thing, agreeably to the spirit of these words?' Should any unpleasant circumstances in future arise, see whether or not, you may not charge them to your own departure from the pattern set before you. In thus examining yourself by the appointed rule of duty, you may discover what there is in your particular complexion to render the imitation of the pattern more difficult to you than it might be to others. Carry

such difficulties to God: not to request him to relax his laws in consideration of them, but as arguments addressed to his compassion, that he would be pleased to afford those extraordinary succours which you in particular need, in order that you may glorify God in the situation in which you stand.

In seeing these marks of genuine religion upon you, there is but one wish to express on this head, namely, that it may daily increase in you. In seeking the growth of vital piety, you will experience an increase of its attendant blessings. Rest not therefore in your present attainments, but seek to acquire more and more of the character of a real disciple of Jesus Christ. And consider every discovery or attainment in
the

the christian life that either of you may make, as an addition to your common stock of spiritual possessions; and aim at dividing the precious acquisition between yourselves, as those who have no interest separate from each other in any thing. This is to "walk together as heirs of the grace of life*."

Let this "growing in grace," therefore, be matter of frequent and earnest prayer to God for yourselves, and for each other; that as both redeemed by one Saviour, sanctified by one spirit, aiming at one end the glory of God, and hoping at last to meet in one heaven, you may help each other forward, in the path of eternal life.

Thus, instead of being snares to each other, the frequent curse of fond alliances, you will proceed through life blessing, and being

* 1 Pet. iii. 7.

blest to each other, by administering tender admonitions, where you see each other remiss; encouragements, where you are disheartened; or consolations, where you are depressed.

Remember, however, that though I have almost all through this address considered you merely as two persons that have agreed to travel through life together, yet, as was hinted in the beginning, the consequence of your union, is the establishment of an household: and that hereby, a power is put into your hands of contributing something to the formation of public manners.

There is, at least, one thing which the spirit of piety will dictate to you in this view of things; viz. the *consecration of your house,*

house, by the daily returns of family worship. If the fear of God is in your hearts, let there be an altar in your house, inscribed with his adorable name. Here let the master of the house be daily found as the minister of God, presenting the spiritual offerings of prayer and praise. The religious care of a family, seems to be spoken of as a certain effect of real piety, in that account which God gives of Abraham in Gen. xviii. 19. "I know *him*, that he will
" command his children and his household
" after him, and they shall keep the way of
" the LORD, to do justice and judgment."

By this acknowledgment of God, an husband and wife evidence their reverence of his being; they draw down the blessing of God on their family; they diffuse a spirit

of seriousness through it; and probably, as from a religious seminary, convey the seeds of piety into many other families. What objects are these to the formers of a new household! O let them strengthen each other's hands herein. Let her, who has the disposal of all female arrangements, be her husband's willing coadjutor in this work, and not suffer him to wait with his Bible in his hand for that congregation, which she ought to see is ready to attend him at the hour of prayer. Let them heartily concur in this consecration of their abode; that God may be in the midst of them; and that while the habitations of ungodliness, like the houses of the Egyptians, are filled with darkness, and the cry of death, there may be light, and peace, and joy, in their dwelling.

I have

I have hinted above, at a certain impediment to family religion that is sometimes seen in houses, where the worship of God is not altogether omitted. I am obliged, however, to say, that irregularity in this thing, does not always lay at the woman's door; sometimes the man is in the fault, in not fixing a certain hour, or in appointing an inconvenient one, for this business. You will avoid this, and many other errors, by digesting a *system of family government*, and determining to adhere to it. This expedient, you will find a source of numberless advantages; and to have more influence on personal and social happiness, than at first sight it seems to have. Things will go on uncomfortably without it. Where there is order, there is silence, facility, and energy. Have an hour for rising, for devotion,

votion, for meals. Let there be an appropriate portion of time for every office, and for the labours, or recreations, of every member of your family.

How pleasing in this respect is the house of *Eusebius* ! He has the happiness of having a partner, who in her department acts with him, in the maintenance of a well-digested system of domestic government. There is an appointed hour for breakfast; after which (it being on the whole then most convenient) all assemble to pay their devout acknowledgments to GOD, for the mercies of the preceding night. After this, you see every person withdrawing to their respective employments. This exhibition of order that you are presented with in the morning, is but a specimen of what you see all through the

the day. On a Sunday, you observe the same orderly course. After breakfast, the family are assembled to prayers. They are enjoined to attend this service in the same dress in which they are to appear in the House of God; that the preparation of their persons may not be deferred to too late an hour, but that instead of spending the last minute at the glass, there may be a little time for reflection, or private devotion, to them who are so disposed. All being thus ready at a few minute's notice, they are easily collected, and they proceed as an united and regular family to church. You perceive nothing like distraction in this house. Every one knows what he has to do; he can estimate, by the punctuality which is observed, the length of the parts into which the day is divided, and can adjust his

his affairs accordingly. Nor is the *good judgment* of the superintendants more conspicuous, than the *happiness* of the members of this family.

Indeed, order is to be recommended, from its tendency to render every one comfortable. It was, perhaps, this excellency and happy tendency of order, exhibited on a large scale, that helped very much to raise the Royal visitor of Solomon to that high pitch of admiration, in which she exclaimed "Happy are thy men, happy are
" these thy servants, which stand and hear
" thy wisdom continually." These words were the utterance of an admiration occasioned, among other things, by " seeing
" the meat of his table, and the sitting of
" his

“his servants, and the attendance of his ministers*.”

The hints I have given to you, are the result of observation. Invention has not been strained in the fabrication of this address: most of the pains I have been at, have been merely in arranging a number of reflections which have forced themselves on me, from the occurrences I have been a witness of in married life. In the course of my observations, there is nothing that has so frequently struck me as a cause of unhappiness to married people, as the want of religion. This defect, nearly or remotely, produces most of the miseries of a state, designed for the happiness of the sexes. “Who hath

* 1 Kings x. 1—8.

“woe?”

“ woe ? who hath sorrow ? who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ? who hath wounds without cause ? ” — Not merely the drunkard, but all who, like him, place their happiness only in the indulgence of the senses. See that all the prospects of your future happiness are not clouded from such a cause, and that you have not united to make each other miserable, or to experience infelicities that could not reach you in a state of celibacy.

The evil effects of disregarding God are seldom more shockingly exhibited, than in the history of an irreligious couple. Here, where the greatest temporal enjoyments might be found, there is frequently experienced the most exquisite of human miseries. Casting off the fear of God, the union becomes

becomes a source of incessant woes. How can it be otherwise with creatures whose nature is depraved, and who, living without any acknowledgment of God, have no superior power to regulate, to govern them, and prevent the furious out-breaking of violent passions?

The whole house becomes a scene of disorder and wretchedness, where the principals are thus at opposition with God. No just sense of right and wrong appearing there, no lessons of duty being heard in it, no instances of reverence to a Divine Governor being seen, or any thing like an acknowledgment of his authority being expressed, in every part of that house vice is visible; and the members, for want of a common restraint, and common bond of union, become the tempters
and

and punishers of each other. Offences are given; and no religious principle existing, that would lead them either to forgive injuries, or to suppress resentment, vices and mutual offences are multiplied by each other, and the quantity of wretchedness is quickly enhanced to a dreadful amount. What wonder is it, then, to hear of dire distress in such a family? of horrid eruptions of inflamed minds, throwing on all sides bitter reproaches, diabolical imprecations, or destructive weapons? These are the *visible* evils that haunt the abodes of irreligious families.

But these are not all, that follow this neglect of God: Many that exist here are *invisible*. But were all the griefs, the loathings, the hatreds, the remorses, the apprehensions

hensions that are experienced, equally as conspicuous as the actions to which they give birth, we should not even then have a full view of all the evils that flow from this source. We must follow the guilty pair into the eternal world, if we would ascertain all the effects of this first error. We must hear their reproaches. We must be witnesses of their recriminations. We must see them, who once exchanged vows of eternal tenderness, transformed into beings of the most hostile dispositions towards each other; and meeting, only to augment their mutual miseries by mutual accusations. This is the dreadful ultimatum, to which the history of an irreligious couple tends.

Mercy, however, sometimes interposes, to prevent this awful result of things. The

offenders are commiserated, changed, and made happy. Light breaks in upon them, and they see at a glance, the source whence all their miseries are derived, namely, a disregard to God. They repent. They are forgiven. They are transformed, and are now no longer to be described as "hateful, " and hating one another *."

Thus reconciled to God, and to each other, it becomes the business of their lives to repair the mischiefs their irreligion has occasioned in the family. Their house has been polluted, it must now be dedicated to God. God must reign there. Evils are not so easily removed, as they are introduced: but their aim is right, and God is on their side; and under such patronage,

* Titus iii. 3.

" Valleys

"Valleys are exalted; mountains are level-
"led; the crooked is made straight; and
"the rough places are made plain."
Things thus renovated, Religion introduces
Peace; an heavenly guest; and the social
endearments of a family, cemented by the
fear and love of God, are experienced.

The happiness of such a family I shall
set before you, in a short account of *Evan-
der and Theodosia*.

They were both the offspring of pious
parents. Their union was a natural one:
it had all the qualities that accompany an
attachment founded not merely on simila-
rity of religious views. It was such an
affection as they could neither suppress, nor

* Mai. xl. 4

direct to another object. But though their attachment was not produced by their religion, it was nourished by it. Whatever they saw in each other's person or temper to unite their hearts, was augmented by the satisfaction they had in each other's piety, and the consequent prospects of spending an harmonious life, and a blessed eternity together.

Their hands were joined; and the delicate reserves that religion taught them hitherto to observe in each other's company now being unnecessary, they entered on a scene blessed with all the enjoyments that an unshackled affection could yield to minds seasoned with the benevolence and purity of christianity. Their equal regard to God diminished not one enjoyment in which a

fond

fond couple could share, but was, on the contrary, a source of social gratifications; that mere affection for each other could not have opened to them: and while they delighted in God, they delighted in the society of each other.

Their unanimity, their visible though unstudied interchanges of kindness, their peace, and unaffected abstinence from whatever

was immoral, had an assimilating influence on their family; and served to give considerable effect to that religious order they never failed to exercise over their domestics. The invisible world being in a great measure habitually before them, they both in their respective departments, attended to those who were under them, (whether children or servants) as having the charge of

immor-

immortals. They began *early* with the infusion of religious ideas into the minds of their children. But this pious care extending to every member of their family, they rarely hired a new servant without feeling an anxious wish, that that person might know something more of God, by coming among them: and in the desire of this attainment, so grateful to the benevolence of their hearts, they would often wave that severe animadversion on a fault, to which a sudden attack on their tempers might urge them. They wished, that that servant for his own sake might be led to reflect, that religion rendered people not difficult to please, nor prompt to punish.

Thus, honouring God, they were honoured by him. Their family was not a
society

society of starched formalists, distinguished by some unnatural peculiarity of dress, or language; but while they looked like the members of other families, lived differently. They were taught to reverence the word and ordinances of God. They were taught that the blessing of God, and the favour of their common superiors, were to be expected in fulfilling the duties of their stations, and in the discharge of good offices towards each other. No mean parasite could thrive in this soil; for favouritism was conscientiously struck out of that system, which the heads of the family had adopted: and every one knew, that impartial kindness was to be the rule of their mutual intercourse.

Thus taught, they repaid their teachers, by learning and practising the lessons. The

house was the abode of regularity, industry, uprightness, and peace. It was not exempt, indeed, from human infirmities, (for my scene is not laid among disembodied spirits) yet it shewed to what a degree of excellence human nature may be brought, under proper management; and it produced social gratifications, untasted, where the cultivation of religious principle is neglected. Nor was it possible, not to trace all the regularity and comfort of this abode up to the influence, that the genuine religion of Evan-der and Theodosia had over the whole family. Their authority, their instruction, and example, accounted for all that distinguished this happy society.

They had the reward of seeing the most blessed effects follow their ruling over their
house

house in the fear of God. It was subject
like other houses, to mortality; but this
event was softened by the manner in which
it was met, both by those who departed,
and those who were called to give them up.
The former being enabled to rejoice in the
truths of that gospel that had been incultu-
rated in the family, and to close their eyes
in peace; and the latter, to find a relief
under the painful stroke that tore one friend
from the other, in the well-grounded hope
of meeting again in a better world.

Among other events of this sort that
broke in upon the enjoyments of this family,
was the death of Theodosia. I will not
detail to you every circumstance of her last
illness, but just present you with the con-
cluding events.

Evander

Evander approached her bed side one morning as usual, to enquire how she had passed the night; to whom she replied in the following terms: "Thank you, my
"dear Evander. I should be glad for
"your sake to be able to say, I had a
"better night than usual. I know how
"such a report would gladden your heart,
"but I am not able to give such an ac-
"count of myself. Indeed, I find myself
"going apace, and I had determined before
"I had the pleasure of seeing you this
"morning, to address myself to you, and
"the rest of the family, before my illness
"should render me any weaker." She was
going to begin with him, but seeing the
tide of grief suddenly rising in the breast of
Evander, she suspended for while the exe-

cution of her intention, and grasping each other's hand, some minutes were spent by them both, in the silent indulgence of tears.

When this effusion had in some measure subsided, she began: "We have thought of this before; and I trust we shall both be sustained in this last conflict. To you, indeed, the hardest part of the trial is allotted. You love me; and therefore unworthy as I am of such a regard, you will feel a loss. I have, indeed, something here, for which I could think it worth while to live. It is you. It is my children. But there is One above, for whom I can willingly leave you all, dear, deservedly dear, as you are to me. I hope to be with him. Unworthy as I am

"am of the least of his mercies, I trust I
" may warrantably rejoice in him, as the
" God of my salvation. I have fought to
" know him. He has not suffered me to
" live indifferent to him. Grace has taught
" me what I am, and what I want. It
" has taught me to look for present peace
" and everlasting happiness, in making the
" mediation of a crucified Saviour the
" ground of my trust, and his example the
" pattern of my conduct: and that grace
" encourages me to hope for the forgive-
" ness of my sins, through his blood. In
" this hope of salvation through him, and
" the sense I have (feeble as it is) of my
" unutterable obligations to the God of all
" grace, I rejoice in the prospect of that
" enjoyment of his presence, on which the
" re-

“redeemed spirit enters, when it has quit-
“ted the body.

“I have a confidence in you, that sets
“me at ease with respect to the care ne-

“cessary to be taken of my dear children;

“but above all, I am enabled to leave them

“with God. Thus, have I little to lose,

“in comparison of what I have to gain, in

“leaving this world; but you, my dear

“Evander! have yet to maintain the chris-

“tian conflict. Be, however, of good

“cheer. God is all-sufficient.

“You have often encouraged me in my

“religious course, permit me to make my

“last recompense to you in kind. God,

“I know, will bless you. He will keep

“you amidst the snares of life, direct you

“in all the labours and difficulties of the
“family, and support you in the last hour,
“as he does me. Then shall we meet
“again.—I do rejoice in this expectation.

“I thank you for all your tenderness,
“care, and kindness;—for all your admo-
“nitions, reproofs, and counsels;—for all
“the candour with which you have inter-
“preted my failings. I am thankful for
“the example you have been enabled to
“set me, and for the care you have taken
“of my soul. You have watched over
“me in this respect, and I trust I shall
“have reason, as a creature designed for a
“future state, ever to bless God for bring-
“ing us together.”——She meant to say
more, but her affections weaken'd the power
of utterance; and she, withal, saw it was

too much at present for Evander. He would have replied, but the occasion allowed him no command of himself. He would have prayed, and fell on his knees by her bed side; but stopping in the middle of the first sentence,—he wept, and retired.

Religion, while it cherished all the sensibilities that adorned the man, opened resources to Evander, no stranger to the views, faith, and dispositions, that form the christian. Reflection and prayer in his closet, restored to him the power of supporting another interview with Theodosia. He rejoiced with her, in the prospects of everlasting felicity. He thanked her, for having so well filled up her station in life; and kneeling down, he blessed the Father of mercies, for having vouchsafed to them
that

that knowledge of himself, the influence of which had hitherto sweetened their society, and now relieved them both, under the pain of separation.

When he had risen from his knees, Theodosia expressed a desire, that all the family might be admitted into her chamber, when *Paternus*, their parish minister, should make his visit. "For," said she, "our family worship has been one of my greatest enjoyments. I should like to join once more with all my household in this act; and if I leave it to another day, it may not be practicable." Not long after, *Paternus* entered the room; to whom, after the customary enquiries were answered, the proposal of Theodosia was mentioned. *Paternus* was pleased with the design.

In a little time, all were ready. Every domestic was admitted into the chamber. The servants were arranged at some distance from the bed, but in sight of Theodosia, who was raised by pillows, supported by two of her children. Paternus began by reading a portion of the 14th chapter of St. John's gospel, to which he added a few reflections, calculated to infuse into the minds of this little congregation a desire to "die the death of the righteous." They were preparing to conclude with a prayer, when they were desired, by Theodosia, still to keep their seats. "Paternus," said she, addressing herself to the minister, "will you permit me to interrupt you for a few moments, while I declare, in the hearing of my family, my faith in that Redeemer whom
H " you

“you have preached unto us.” She was
desired, by Paternus, to proceed.

“The testimony of a dying woman,”
continued she, “ought to have some weight
“with those who hear it. I here then de-
“clare, that nothing supports me in the
“prospect of an approaching eternity, but
“faith in a crucified Saviour. On him
“alone, I depend for salvation. On the
“merits of my Redeemer, I ground all
“my hope of future happiness. And this
“I declare, in presence of my husband,
“children, and servants, that they may re-
“member that what I professed through
“life, I rejoiced in in death. Blessed
“Redeemer! accept my grateful acknow-
“ledgments of that love, which led thee
“to die for me, and fit me to enter that
“society

“society of glorified saints, who to eternity
“shall ascribe their salvation to him who
“loved them, and washed them from their
“sins in his own blood *! Lord, I wait
“for thy salvation!” Paternus then kneeled
down and prayed, and thus concluded the
last act of family devotion, in which Theo-
dofia joined.

Paternus retired. The servants, bathed
in tears, were preparing to withdraw, but
were desired to stay. Theodofia thought
that an admonition from her, in present cir-
cumstances, might impress their minds, and
be long remembered. She was loath to
lose the opportunity; but there was a native
modesty in her, through which, she was
always shocked at the idea of any thing

* Rev. i. 5.

ostentatious. To cover, therefore, her intention, she began with calling first one, and then another of her servants, to her bedside, and making those kind enquiries about their health, which seemed to be occasioned merely by their being for some time invisible to her through her confinement. When she had thus gone round with her enquiries, she began to speak of her own case. She told them of her supports, of the goodness of God, and the blessedness of religion. She admonished them in the most affectionate terms, not to neglect religion, nor to be inattentive to the instructions of Paternus, to whose zeal, humility and benevolence, she bore witness. She encouraged them to seek the kingdom of God, by referring them to that composure which they now saw in her, who knew not whether she
had

had a day to live. "Thus peaceful," said she, "will you be in the last hour, if you make it the main business of life to know and serve God. We may not all meet together again here: But be followers of Christ, and we shall meet around his throne in heaven."

I will not attempt to describe the effect which this tender address had on their affections. In an agony of grief, some of them approached to kiss her hand. Others fled the room, to give vent to those feelings they were no longer able to restrain. There was a scene that occurred after this, which I must entirely suppress; it being impossible for me to represent it justly. This was her giving a parting charge to her children.

Here I put a period to my narration, with just observing, that notwithstanding all the anguish which the fond survivors of Theodosia suffered, in being obliged to separate from her, the supports of christianity were felt. They knew there was a possibility of their meeting again; and they felt what they had been taught, namely, that a far more happy interview awaited them, that followed her, "who through faith and patience inherited the promises."

These are the felicities of married life, where the duties of it are produced by the fear of God. In such instances, we see something of Eden restored. How great and how lovely the contrast to the wretched family of an irreligious pair is that, where the members live together in
peace.

peace and love—delighting in God, and in the society of each other; worshipping his name, regarding his word, attending regularly his ordinances, discharging their several duties, and bearing each other's burdens;—and when called away by death, closing their eyes in peace, and quitting each other in the hope of being united again in God's house above, never to be separated,

Such was the family of Evander and Theodosia. Like them, may you rule your house in the fear of God! and you will be “lovely and pleasant in your lives, and in your deaths not divided*.” You have entered into a state designed by Him who instituted it, (among other things) for your happiness. It is admirably calculated

* 2 Sam. i. 23.

to answer such an end; but if it is perverted, you derive no advantages from it; but the blame in this case falls not on the institution, but on yourselves.

I have suggested a number of rules, because the thing requires rules. It is in this state, as in others, happiness is the reward of diligence. "In all labour there is profit." Let what has been recommended to you, not merely obtain your approbation, as to the propriety of the advice; or merely excite a wish, that you may not fail in observing it; but *make a business of the duties* to which you have been exhorted. It is now, that rules are to be adopted. Now, before the evils they are designed to prevent, have made their appearance. There

is no difficulty in attending to them, now that your hearts are sincerely and warmly united. After a disgust taken, the rule may seem good; but it may be felt impracticable.

Give yourselves to God, and to one another. Pray for grace to fulfil your vows to each other. Attend to the examples the Holy Scriptures have assigned to each of you; and you'll find the more you study and apply them to the several occurrences of your lives, that they enjoin every thing that has been recommended in the former part of this address, in order to preserve your first affections, and to cultivate goodness of temper. Thus, shall you be happy in yourselves, comforts to each other, patterns to your neighbours, and witnesses of the

excellency of that holy estate, in which the hands of the first human pair were joined by their benign Creator.



THE END.

